

Keeping Ahead of the Game

By Leslie Westlake

Pete Dye returns to Sea Pines to transform an aging course into a whole new ballgame.

Forty years ago, Pete Dye established a new era of golf course architecture with the signature small greens, waste bunkers and dramatic angles of Harbour Town Golf Links at The Sea Pines Resort on Hilton Head Island. Home to the Verizon Heritage Tournament since 1969, Harbour Town Links is recognized each year as one of America's top courses and is often named by PGA TOUR professionals as one of their favorite courses.

Now Dye has returned to Sea Pines to build yet another masterpiece of the game. Charged with the task of transforming another course, the aging Sea Marsh, into a completely new and wickedly challenging course, Dye simply wiped the slate clean. The new Heron Point by Pete Dye bears no resemblance to the course that once occupied this space. "Sea Pines has such a great golf image, so you've got to keep all of your golf courses up to date. That's what you have to do to keep competitive with the world," said Dye, "You've got to stay ahead of the game."

Golf is not a game for sissies.

Noting the trend that resort players are looking for a real challenge, a round to remember and to mark their vacation experience, Dye designed this course with specific landing areas, mounding and movement in the fairways and no "gimmes" for those who miss a fairway or a green. Dye does not believe a mound should shoot a ball back when a player

misses a green. The Ocean Course at Kiawah Island, SC, another Pete Dye design, has been home to The Ryder Cup and is one of the most difficult courses to play in the nation, yet resort players can't wait for their chance to play this course. It seems golf is not a game for sissies and Heron Point by Pete Dye should satisfy any player looking for a good story or two to tell their foursome back home.

The multi-million dollar Heron Point Course is 7,000 yards from the back tees with a mix of short and long holes. Six sets of tees on each hole allow the player to select a shorter course, but that doesn't necessarily mean an easier round. Said Dye, "It's a great combination of holes out here. We think a lot of the holes will have more shot value than they did before, all the way around. There will be some talk about this golf course."

Work began on this course in

September 2006. Grassing started in May 2007, and the course opened September 17, 2007, a remarkable turnaround time for a total transformation. The Heron Point course joins Dye's original Harbour Town Golf Links and the Ocean Course, the first course built on Hilton Head Island and redesigned by Mark McCumber in 1995, to give The Sea Pines Resort guest a total of 54 holes of play and a forecaddie program at Harbour Town Golf Links to enhance the golf experience.

There's no doubt that Hilton Head Island is a golfer's "must play" with more than 20 premier courses on the island, plus nearby Bluffton, Daufuskie Island and Fripp Island. The climate lends itself to year-round play, and the 12 miles of wide, white-sand beaches and beautiful marshlands that surround Hilton Head make this a favorite vacation spot for each member of the family. The new Heron Point course by Pete Dye is just one more excuse to plan a visit here.

Find out more in *Places...*

Turn to page 154 in the "green pages" for more on Heron Point.



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